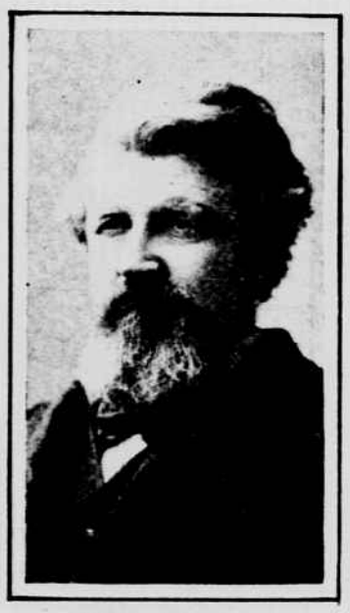
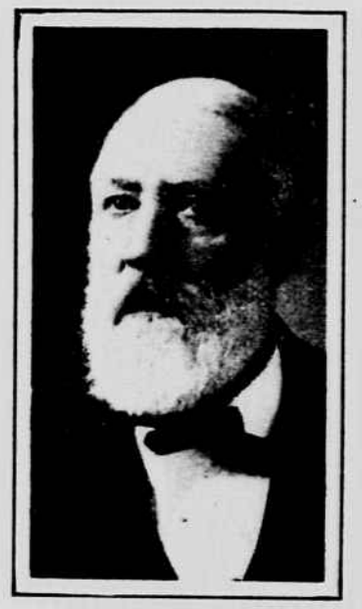
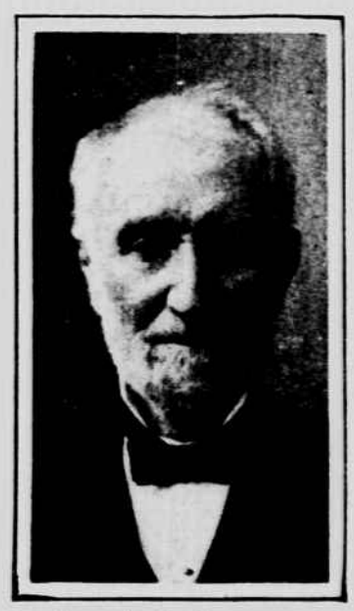
Schuyler Colfax, 1863-69.



Michael C. Kerr, 1875-76.



Joseph W. Keifer, 1881-83.



Joseph G. Cannon, 1903-10.

and he would have been a dangerous man for John L. Sullivan to tackle at his highest point of glory. Kilgore marched up to the door of the House and ordered the doorkeeper to open it. The doorkeeper looked at the Speaker, who, with a glance, forbade him. Then Buck Kilgore, lifting his gigantic foot, sent it crashing against the big mahogany door, which gave way before the human catapult. The locking in of members was stopped right away.

The traditions concerning Mr. Blaine's long service as Speaker are that, although extremely partizan in his rulings, he had the magic art of conciliating those he oppressed. In those days party and sectional feeling was intense, and the Civil War was fought over many times on the floor of the House. The rights of the Democratic minority were little respected by Mr. Blaine or anybody else; but that minority numbered some of the first men of the age, and they fought stubbornly, contesting every inch of parliamentary ground.

After having ruled steadily in favor of his party, when Blaine would leave the chair he would saunter down on the floor, go up to some Democrat whom he had ruthlessly refused to recognize, put his arm round his neck, and in two minutes talk him into a good humor. It was in vain that Democrats, smarting under humiliations, would be standoffish with him. He would meet a group of political enemies in the corridors and, turning upon them the battery of his charm and fascinating manners, carry them off to the restaurant, and invite them to abuse him all they liked over some good champagne.

Probably the greatest Speaker the Democrats ever had was Samuel Jackson Randall. He was never in harmony with his party, as he was an open and confessed protectionist. There never was a more singular divergence in the careers of two men than that of Randall and Blaine, nor a greater similarity in their original circumstances. Both entered Congress at the same time, and each served three terms as Speaker. Both were intense partizans; but they showed it differently. Both had superb dignity and grace in the chair, and both were very handsome men. There the resemblance ended. Mr. Blaine, as Speaker, artfully manipulated the House and controlled it by matchless tact and happy adjournments.

Mr. Randall had no indirect methods. His appearance showed it. He was a clean shaved man, with an iron jaw and the darkest, deepest, clearest eyes that saw everything. No man ever controlled the House as Randall did, without tyrannizing over it, as did Reed. Mr. Randall used the gavel very little; but when the House got the bit between its teeth a lurid light came into the great Speaker's eyes, and a peculiar set to his thin lipped, handsome mouth which showed the mastery of the man, and when the gavel whacked quick and hard an electric thrill ran through every man on the floor. Order was restored, and the most astute parliamentarian, of whom there were many in those days, knew that the man in the chair was master of them all. An open and earnest candidate for the presidency, Mr. Randall's fitness was never questioned, and he might have been President but for the hoodoo against the Speaker. In private life he was singularly gentle, and respected by the bitterest of his political opponents.

When he and Mr. Blaine entered Congress together, the pay of a Representative was three thousand dollars a year. In those days Washington was a small city, and three thousand dollars was fully equal to the seventy-five hundred now received by Representatives. Neither Blaine nor Randall had any private fortune whatever, or any means of livelihood beyond his congressional employment. Each had a young family, Mr. Blaine having six children and Mr. Randall five. The salary of the Speaker at the time was eight thousand dollars. Mr, Randall did not, as Speaker, change his mode of life or residence, the latter being an insignificant little house on Capitol Hill, an unfashionable quarter of the town. In that house he died, after more than twenty years' service in Congress. He left not a penny.

It is a thing little known, but Randall's last days were made comfortable by the sympathy and thoughtfulness of John Wanamaker. The latter, then Postmaster General in President Harrison's Cabinet, knew how narrow Mr. Randall's means were, and offered every possible assistance. He succeeded in persuading Mr. Randall to take a country house, where he would be more comfortable. This Randall agreed to do; but with stern integrity, and the pride of a poor man, saved out of his congressional salary enough to pay the rent of the place.

Mr. Blaine started as poor as Randall; but soon lived in luxury, and built one of the most magnificent houses in Washington, which is now owned by George Westinghouse, the manufacturer and inventor. Soon after building it Blaine leased it to the Chicago millionaire, Levi Z. Leiter; then bought a roomy old mansion facing Lafayette Square, diagonally opposite the White House.

This house had an unlucky history, and some years before it had become impossible to rent it for a private residence on account of the tragedies that had occurred there, and it had been let to the Government for the use of the Quartermaster General's department. In that house occurred the Sickles and Francis Scott Key tragedy, and from the steps Mrs. Sickles had waved the signal across the park to Key that resulted in the duel in which he was killed and General Sickles was badly injured. He still lives and is eighty-nine. Later in that house William H. Seward lived when the attack on his life was made at the time of the assassination of President Lincoln. Then it was occupied by General Belknap when Secretary of War. It was proved on the floor of the House that post traderships had been sold, and other corrupt transactions had taken place with which Secretary Belknap appeared to be connected. It was well known that these things were done by a member of Secretary Belknap's family. The latter, on finding this out, immediately assumed the entire blame, resigned from the War Department under a storm of opprobrium, and spent the rest of his life a ruined man, living in one room in Washington.

When Mr. Blaine occupied the house he was defeated for the presidency, defeated for the nomination at the next Republican National Convention, lost three grown children, and died a brokenhearted man. After his death the house was razed, and a theater was built on the site.

The Speaker, when he leaves the chair, may appoint a presiding officer pro tem., or may designate one in writing if he be not present. This, of course, does not apply when the House goes into Committee of the Whole House upon the State of the Union. Then the Speaker leaves the chair, and a chairman is elected by the House. A curious story is told of a certain Speaker who adjourned the House one day, intending to preside at the next day's session. That night, however, he disappeared, and could not be found. His friends finally discovered him about daybreak, but in such a condition as to be totally unable even to write. The House was to meet at eleven o'clock, and every effort was made to restore the Speaker so he could sign his name to the paper appointing a presiding officer pro tem.; but it was impossible. He could not hold a pen, and was indeed perfectly unconscious.

His friends concluded to take the desperate expedient of writing a note in his name designating the party leader on the floor as the presiding officer. Then the question came up as to who should take the responsibility; for if it were known the Speaker would be ruined, all the legislation of that day invalidated, and the writer liable to criminal prosecution. Finally a distinguished journalist, a close friend of the Speaker, said that he would do it. It was many years before the secret leaked out. Then all concerned were dead or had retired from public life.

The salary of the Speaker is twelve thousand dollars a year, and he has luxurious quarters at the Capitol, ornamented with portraits of all his predecessors. As the office is a trying one, the Speaker needs rooms for rest and refreshment. During the term of Speaker Henderson, who preceded Speaker Cannon, a splendid outfit of china, glass, silver, and linen was provided for him; so that, instead of going to the restaurant in the basement of the Capitol for his meals, he could have them served in the splendid room appropriated to the Speaker, and entertain any number of persons there. As Speaker Henderson was of the Scottish blood, he had specially made china decorated with a thistle.

When Uncle Joe Cannon came into office, he had the whole outfit packed up and put away, and took his milk punches in very democratic fashion among the other members in the House restaurant. The present Speaker had these things brought out and furbished up, and is using them again.

It is usual at the close of a session of Congress for the minority leader to offer a resolution of thanks to the Speaker for the "able and impartial manner" in which he has presided over the House. This was the unbroken custom until Speaker Reed began to be called the "Czar." At the close of his first term, the Democrats refused to consent to the introduction of the resolution. Mr. Reed felt this deeply, and it did not sweeten his temper. It has been offered to every Speaker since then. Former Speaker Cannon, a wily man, said in response to a very flattering resolution offered to him, "I have been as fair as the exigencies of politics would permit."

This is about as fair as any Speaker can be.

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

By CAROLYN WELLS

SCENE: *The Pelhams' living room. It is decorated for Christmas, and on tables are displayed many beautiful gifts that have been sent to Mr. and Mrs. Pelham.*

MRS. PELHAM (*in pretty evening gown, and a spray of holly in her hair, looks wistful and discontented. She stands by a table and fingers some of the gifts, then sits at the piano and hums a snatch of a Christmas carol, and then throws herself into an easy chair. She speaks*): Dick, *do* stop reading the paper, and be Christmassy! It might as well be the eighteenth of July as the twenty-fourth of December, for all the Christmas spirit you show! I do think this is the pokiest old Christmas Eve I ever spent, and I thought it was going to be the loveliest! I thought for once I'd have everything ready ahead of time—and now look at the result! Nothing to do, nothing to enjoy, no surprises. Everybody said, "Let's buy our gifts early, and so save the poor shopgirls' lives." And goodness knows I'm only too glad to help the poor shopgirls in any way I can!

Why, I never wait for my change,—if it's only a few pennies,—and you'd be surprised to see how pleased and surprised they are at that. It's pathetic to see their gratitude for six cents. Why, the other day, Mrs. Muchmore kept me waiting with her a long time, to get her nine cents change, and when I suggested that she come away without it, and let the shopgirl have it, she looked at me as if I had robbed her. Well, then we were late for the matinée, and had to take a taxicab; so she didn't make much, after all.

No; I'm a great friend of the shopgirls, and I'm glad to do all I can for them; but this buying Christmas presents in October is so tame and uninteresting! Then I bought all my tissue paper and holly ribbon and fancy seals in November; and early in December I had the whole lot all tied up and labeled. I had three clothes baskets full of the loveliest looking parcels! And then they sat around till I was sick of the sight of them!

Don't you remember, Dick, how you used to tumble over them in the guest rooms? And you said I was a dear, forehanded little wife to have them all ready so soon? You'll never have such a forehanded little wife again, I can tell you!

And then, to save the poor expressmen, everybody is urged to send their presents early nowadays. So I sent mine all off a week ago. And everybody sent theirs to me a week ago. To be sure, this plan has the advantage that often I can see what someone else sends me, before I send a return gift. My! it was lucky I saw Bertha Hamilton's American centerpiece before I sent her that veil case! I changed, and sent her an Empire mirror, and she'll think her centerpiece rather skinny now!

But, all the same, I hate this fashion. Why, I've had all this junk set out on tables four days now, and I'm tired of the sight of it! And even the p-p-paper and st-string are all cleared away. No—Dick—I'm not crying, and you needn't try to coax me up! Well, of course, it *isn't* your fault, though you *did* egg me on. But everybody does it now, and we've even written our notes of thanks to each other! I always used to dread doing those the day after Christmas; but now it makes me homesick to think they're all d-done. And even this lovely necklace you gave me—I've had it a w-week, and it doesn't seem like a Christmas present at all! Yes, I know I gave you your gold cigarette case two weeks ago; but I wanted to be sure you liked it, before I had it monogrammed. It seems now as if I had given it to you last year!

Oh, I think it used to be lovely when we didn't get our things until Christmas Eve or Christmas Day—and then some belated presents would come straggling along for days afterward! And the night before Christmas we were madly rushing around tying up things, and I'd be up till all hours finishing a piece of embroidery, and you'd have to tear downtown for some forgotten presents, and the bundles were simply piling in, and the expressman would come at midnight, grumbling a little, but very merry and Christmassy! Then I'd have to set the alarm, and get up at five o'clock Christmas morning to press off my centerpiece, and pack off Clara's box, and do a thousand things before breakfast. And we'd eat breakfast by snatches, between